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# AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS Canberra

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## JOB VACANCIES, MAY 1979

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NOTE: Quarterly surveys of job vacancies, suspended following the May 1978 survey, have been reintroduced. See paragraphs 11 and 12 concerning discontinuity of series.

### INQUIRIES

If you want to know more about these statistics ring Mr Joe Christensen on Canberra 526581 or our State office, or write to Information Services, ABS, P.O. Box 10, Belconnen A.C.T. 2616

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### MAIN FEATURES

NOTE: The survey estimates are subject to sampling variability, as explained in paragraphs 13 and 14.

- At the end of May 1979 the estimated number of job vacancies in Australia, as measured by the survey, was 34,300.
- The principal industries in which vacancies were recorded were public administration and community services (10,000), manufacturing (9,800) and wholesale and retail trade (6,100).
- There were about eight vacancies per 1,000 jobs (i.e. filled plus unfilled).

- for waterside workers employed on a casual basis, and
- for employees of private employers (other than hospitals) not subject to payroll tax.

5. Because of limitations in scope and coverage, the survey results do not give estimates of the total number of job vacancies in Australia.

### Sample Design

6. Respondents included in the survey were selected from lists of private and government employers stratified by State, industry and number of employees. Employers with 1,200 or more employees were fully enumerated and a sample was selected from the remainder of employers. The total number of employers in the survey was about 3,100.

7. The small size of the sample has imposed some restrictions on the amount of detail that can be published. Estimates are provided, for each State and Territory, of the numbers of vacancies for males, for females, and for either males or females without preference, and of vacancies in manufacturing and other industries, together with job vacancy rates. Estimates of the number of job vacancies in selected industries are also provided, for Australia only.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

#### Introduction

In order to obtain information about job vacancies the ABS conducted sample surveys of employers by mail in March each year from 1974 to 1978. Quarterly surveys, conducted by telephone, were introduced in May 1977. To reduce delays in the collection and publication of survey results to a minimum, the quarterly surveys were designed for the collection of a limited amount of data by telephone from a relatively small sample of employers. The surveys also provided an indication of the extent to which vacancies were notified to the Commonwealth Employment Service.

2. The annual and quarterly surveys were suspended in March and May 1978, respectively, as part of the measures necessary to bring the activities of the ABS within the resources available to it at that time.

3. The quarterly surveys have now been reintroduced, as from May 1979, but the ABS has no intention at present of reintroducing the annual surveys.

#### Scope and Coverage

4. The surveys cover vacancies in private employment and in Australian, State and local government employment. All vacancies (as defined in paragraph 8) for wage and salary earners are included except those:

- in the defence forces
- in agriculture
- in private households employing staff

### Definitions

8. A *job vacancy* is a job available for immediate filling on the survey date and for which recruitment action had been taken by the employer. Recruitment action includes efforts to fill vacancies by advertising, by factory notices, by notifying government or private employment agencies or trade unions and by contacting, interviewing or selecting applicants already registered with the enterprise or organisation. Excluded are jobs available only to existing employees of the organisation. In this context the Australian Public Service and the Public Services of the States and the Northern Territory are treated as 'organisations'. Also excluded are vacancies

- of less than one day's duration
- to be filled by persons already hired or by promotion or transfer of existing employees
- to be filled by employees returning from paid or unpaid leave or after industrial disputes
- not available for immediate filling on the survey date
- not available within the particular State or Territory to which the return relates
- for work carried out under contract
- for which no effort is being made to fill the position.



9. *Vacancies for males or females* are those jobs open to male or female applicants without preference.

10. The *job vacancy rate* is calculated by expressing the number of job vacancies as a percentage of the number of employees plus vacancies.

#### Discontinuity of Series

11. In the previous series, vacancies in the government sector referred to all those that were not restricted to persons already employed within a *particular department or authority*. In the current series they refer *only* to those vacancies which are not restricted to persons already employed within a *particular government sector*, e.g. a State Public Service or the Australian Public Service. This change has had a significant effect on the estimates for the Australian Capital Territory.

12. Vacancies of less than one day's duration have been excluded. This may have had some slight effect on comparability with the results of previous surveys.

#### Reliability of the Estimates

13. Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from a sample of employers, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if the information had been obtained from all employers within the coverage of the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the *standard error*, which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of employers was included in the survey. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all employers had been included and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

14. Standard errors of Australian estimates for May 1979 are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Standard errors of estimates for States and Territories are generally not greater than 20 per cent.

15. An example of the use of standard errors is as follows. The survey estimate of the number of job vacancies in Australia in May 1979 is 34,300. From Table 1 it will be seen that the standard error of this estimate is 1,800 and therefore there are about two chances in three that the value that would have been produced if all employers within the coverage of the survey had been included will be within the range 32,500 to 36,100, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the value will be within the range 30,700 to 37,900.

#### Seasonal Factors

16. Comparison of job vacancy figures at different dates may be affected by seasonal influences. Calculation of seasonally adjusted figures will not be

possible until results of quarterly surveys for two or three years are available.

#### Comparability with Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) Statistics

17. For purposes of comparison the numbers of job vacancies registered with the CES are shown in Table 1. These figures are substantially different from the survey estimates, the principal reasons being:

- (a) because notification of vacancies to the CES is voluntary, many vacancies are not registered.
- (b) the CES figures may include some vacancies already filled or cancelled by the date at which the figures are compiled, but about which the CES may not have been notified.
- (c) the survey estimates relate to vacancies immediately available for filling on the survey date, whereas the CES figures relate to vacancies which were unfilled at the Friday nearest the end of the month and which employers claimed could be filled if labour were supplied immediately or within the following month.
- (d) the coverage of the surveys is somewhat restricted (see paragraphs 4 and 5) and the results are subject to sampling variability (see paragraphs 13 to 15).

#### Related Publications

18. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications which are available on request:

*Unemployment (Preliminary Estimates)* (6201.0)  
*The Labour Force (Preliminary)* (6202.0)  
*The Labour Force* (6203.0)  
*Civilian Employees* (6213.0)  
*Job Vacancies May 1978* (6231.0)

19. All publications produced by the ABS are listed in *Catalogue of Publications* (1101.0) which is available free of charge from any ABS office.

#### Symbols and other usages

- nil, or less than half the final digit shown
- n.a. not available
- .. not applicable
- (where drawn across a column between two consecutive series) break in continuity of series
- \* subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes

20. Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.



TABLE 1. JOB VACANCIES AND JOB VACANCY RATES (a)

	ABS surveys						Job vacancy rate (a) (per cent)	Vacancies registered with the CES (d) ('000)	Ratio of CES figure to ABS total (e) (per cent)
	Number of vacancies ('000)								
	For males	For females	For males or females	Manu- facturing (b)	Other industries (c)	Total			
1977 - May	18.6	8.1	12.6	11.4	27.9	39.3	0.9	19.3	49
Aug.	19.7	7.6	13.8	12.0	29.0	41.0	0.9	19.7	48
Nov.	16.7	5.3	14.4	9.3	27.1	36.4	0.9	19.2	53
1978 - Feb.	13.6	6.8	15.6	9.4	26.6	36.0	0.8	21.2	59
May	<u>13.2</u>	<u>5.8</u>	<u>13.2</u>	<u>9.3</u>	<u>23.0</u>	<u>32.2</u>	<u>0.8</u>	17.1	53
1979 - May (f)	14.8	6.2	13.3	9.8	24.5	34.3	0.8	17.7	52
Standard error of May 1979 estimates	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.6	1.8	0.01	..	..

(a) For definitions see paragraphs 8 to 10. (b) Australian Standard Industrial Classification (ASIC) Division C. (c) ASIC Divisions A to L excluding Division C (Manufacturing), Sub-divisions 01, 02 (agriculture, etc.) and 94 (private households employing staff, and defence forces). (d) Adjusted to exclude primary production. (e) The ratios are affected by undercoverage of the ABS surveys and by vacancies remaining on the CES register but already filled or cancelled. They therefore do not represent the proportion of total job vacancies in Australia that are registered with the CES. (f) See paragraphs 11 and 12 regarding discontinuity of the series.

TABLE 2. JOB VACANCIES (a) : INDUSTRY, MAY 1979  
('000)

Industry	Number	Standard error
Manufacturing (b)	9.8	0.8
Metal products, machinery and equipment	5.2	0.5
Basic metal and fabricated metal products;		
other machinery, etc.	3.6	0.5
Transport equipment	1.6	0.2
Other manufacturing	4.6	0.7
Non-manufacturing (c)	24.5	1.6
Wholesale and retail trade	6.1	0.9
Transport and storage; communication	1.1	0.1
Public administration; community services	10.0	0.6
Other non-manufacturing	7.3	1.2
Total	34.3	1.8

(a) For definitions see paragraphs 8 to 10. (b) ASIC Division C. (c) See note (c) to Table 1.



TABLE 3. JOB VACANCIES AND JOB VACANCY RATES (a), STATES AND TERRITORIES  
MAY 1977 TO MAY 1979

Month	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Australia
JOB VACANCIES									
Number ('000)									
For males —									
1977 — May	5.0	6.6	(b)2.1	(b)1.3	2.0	(b)0.9	*	*	18.6
1978 — May	5.3	4.2	1.5	0.6	1.0	0.4	*	*	13.2
1979 — May (e)	6.1	4.2	1.8	(b)0.7	1.2	0.3	0.3	(b)0.1	14.8
For females —									
1977 — May	2.5	(b)3.5	(b)0.8	(b)0.4	(b)0.5	0.2	*	*	8.1
1978 — May	(b)2.7	(b)1.5	(b)0.5	(b)0.2	0.4	*	—	*	5.8
1979 — May (e)	(b)3.2	(b)1.7	0.4	*	0.2	*	—	—	6.2
For males or females —									
1977 — May	2.8	(b)4.3	1.7	1.1	0.4	(b)0.3	0.3	1.7	12.6
1978 — May	4.3	3.8	0.9	(b)0.9	0.8	0.3	0.5	1.7	13.2
1979 — May (e)	4.8	4.7	1.3	0.9	0.7	*	0.2	0.6	13.3
Total —									
1977 — May	10.3	14.4	4.6	2.9	2.9	1.4	(b)0.7	2.1	39.3
1978 — May	12.2	9.5	2.9	1.8	2.1	1.0	0.6	2.1	32.2
1979 — May (e)	14.0	10.6	3.5	2.2	2.1	(b)0.7	0.5	0.7	34.3
Manufacturing (c) —									
1977 — May	3.5	5.5	*	0.7	0.6	*	n.a.	n.a.	11.4
1978 — May	4.1	3.7	(b)0.4	0.5	0.4	(b)0.2	n.a.	n.a.	9.3
1979 — May (e)	3.9	4.1	(b)0.7	0.7	(b)0.4	0.1	—	—	9.8
Other industries (d) —									
1977 — May	6.8	8.9	3.7	2.2	2.4	1.1	n.a.	n.a.	27.9
1978 — May	8.1	5.8	(b)2.5	1.3	1.8	0.8	n.a.	n.a.	23.0
1979 — May (e)	10.1	6.5	2.8	1.5	1.8	(b)0.7	0.5	0.7	24.5
JOB VACANCY RATES (a) (per cent)									
1977 — May	0.7	1.2	0.9	0.7	0.9	1.1	2.7	2.4	0.9
August	0.8	1.2	0.9	0.7	0.9	1.1	1.7	2.4	0.9
November	0.7	1.1	0.5	0.6	0.9	1.3	1.3	2.7	0.9
1978 — February	0.8	1.1	0.5	0.6	0.7	1.0	2.0	2.9	0.8
May	<u>0.8</u>	<u>0.8</u>	<u>0.6</u>	<u>0.4</u>	<u>0.6</u>	<u>0.8</u>	<u>2.3</u>	<u>2.6</u>	<u>0.8</u>
1979 — May (e)	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.7	1.0	0.8

(a) For definitions see paragraphs 8 to 10. (b) Standard error greater than 20 per cent but less than 30 per cent. (c) ASIC Division C. (d) See note (c) to Table 1. (e) See paragraph 11 and 12 regarding discontinuity of the series.